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THE
HISTORY
OF
MARY ANN EDWARDS,
OR, THE
CAPRICIOUS BEAUTY.

CONTAINING,

- I. An account of her birth and parents, her education and growth in beauty, wit and understanding.
- II. Mr. Williams falls in love with her, she slights him, he writes a song on her, but she is still the same, he writes a letter, she answers it scornfully.
- III. He asks her father's leave to address her, he consults his daughter's affection, and finding she dislikes him, orders him not to come any more to the house; Mr. Williams attempts to drown himself, is prevented and restored, has a fever and is like a madman.
- IV. Mr. Edwards, and his daughter and family go to Bath, her fondness for admiration is described, which increases every day, at last falls in love with Captain B—d, as he does with her, obtains leave of her father to court her, is permitted. Letters from each other.
- V. Williams finds her out at Bath, sends a letter, which Captain B—d seeing, is jealous, sends her a letter, and she returns an impertinent answer, he finds out Williams, they fight a duel, and Williams is wounded.
- VI. Mary Ann elopes, and it is thought she has made away with herself, a strange discovery, a letter from her to Williams, another from Williams to Mr. Edwards, Mary Ann intends going abroad, and putting herself in a nunnery for life.
- VII. Williams is married to a lady he was betrothed to before, and who had been lost to her friends for three years.
- VIII. Captain B—d goes in search of Mary Ann, enquires at all the sea ports but in vain, finds her at last by the direction of a letter at an Inn, very ill and in disguise, takes her home, they are married, and all parties are happy.

PRINTED AND SOLD BY A. HAMBLETON.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]



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A^{no} Hambleton

THE
HISTORY
OF
MARY ANN EDWARDS, &c.

CHAP. I.

Her birth, parentage, and education—her infant understanding, the increase of her beauty—her wit, manners, &c. at so early an age.

THE capriciousness of the fair sex, whom nature has blessed with an uncommon share of wit and beauty, has often involved them in difficulties and dangers, which a prudent management of their abilities would have guarded against.

Some indeed have fell sacrifices to their own folly, and intailed misery on themselves to their lives' end.

The subject of the present memoirs, however, had too much sense to be duped by folly, to her own destruction.

Admiration was her principal foible, and this passion,

passion, by the indulgence of her fond parents, became very early habitual to her.

Her infancy was marked with uncommon sprightliness, and as soon as she could speak her parents seemed to perceive she possessed an uncommon share of wit, that her relations and friends to the family were loud in her praise, which was sure to please her father and mother, who, by nature, we must suppose, found truth in such adulation.

To instruct her dawn of understanding, they employed the most approved teachers at home, as they could not bear her to be out of their sight; and in this I do not blame them, as those seminaries of education, called boarding schools, are often schools of destruction to youth and beauty.

Mary Ann took her learning with uncommon facility, and became not only a good female scholar, but improved in all those accomplishments which render the fair sex so agreeable; dancing, music, and all that is called sacrificing to the graces, she soon became perfect mistress of; and the natural sweetness of her temper made her be beloved by all who knew her.

We shall pass over the early part of her life with only saying, that she underwent those disorders which are incident to youth without any injury to her beauty; even the small pox, that enemy to the fair, was prevented from its ravages, by her being inoculated.

Her father was what is called a gentleman farmer, tho' husbandry with him was out of the question, unless for his amusement; fortune, that

fickle



fickle goddess, having been very kind to him, he was in the true sense of the word, rich, so that he could give Mary Ann a portion sufficient to match her with the best gentleman in the county; and she was indulged in every fashionable amusement, but continually attended by her mother and aunt, whose prudence and staid behaviour were a sufficient guard against the attacks of fashionable dissipation.

But before we proceed any further in these memoirs, it will not be amiss to give a short sketch of her person, a sketch I say, as to give her finished picture, would baffle the genius of the most accomplished limners.

Her form was of the middling stature, regulated by the most natural proportion, her shape came exactly up to the idea of the poet, "fine by degrees, and beautifully less."

Her face had not that dead paleness which is generally called fair, the skin was rather brown, through which the blush of the rose overspread her cheeks with the most delicate complexion; her teeth seemed like two rows of polished ivory, and her lips were like rubies for colour, but plump, soft, and inviting; her eyes were black as jet, bright as diamonds, whose lustre amazed the beholder; her hair was of a dark brown, which flowed in natural ringlets down her well turned neck; yet, conscious as she was of her accomplishments, she preserved a simplicity of manner, which rendered her amiable to every one.

Being now between fifteen and sixteen, she began to be taken notice of by the young amorous gallants,

gallants, who, like butterflies, flutter round the fairest flowers; but her heart as yet, was not vulnerable to the shafts of love, yet she was susceptible of flattery, and was not a little pleased to hear her own praises echoed wherever she went.

It is certainly more agreeable to hear one's self spoke well of, than ill, yet beauty and vanity are inseparable companions, and flattery is as unbecoming in the men, as the other vice is in the fair. The men flatter to betray, and the women listen to be ruined; and if they are not, it is often more owing to chance than prudence.

There was a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who was a constant visitor at their house, which was near Farrington, who had conceived a violent passion for Mary Ann, who was now called the beauty of Berkshire.

This gentleman had been very wild, and attached to the fair sex in general; but on his first sight of Mary Ann, he dropped every amorous pursuit, and became honorably in love with her; yet, notwithstanding all his assiduity, she beheld him with the utmost indifference; she behaved civil, indeed, as it was common with her to do to all; but when he came to be more particular, and talked of his passion, she took every opportunity to avoid him, this he could not help perceiving, and drove him almost distracted.

However, he was determined to leave no means untried, if possible to win her regard, but all was in vain. He sent her the following song, imagining that the charms of verse might succeed better than his personal address.

A SONG.

A SONG.

MARY ANN,

I.

If friendship, with good humour too,
 With tender sentiments in view ;
 If these conform a happy plan,
 Ye powers, O give me Mary Ann.

II.

My roving thoughts are past and gone,
 As clouds are chased by the sun ;
 To please her I'll do all I can,
 Could I but have dear Mary Ann.

III.

Tho' fortune, like a fickle jade,
 Has oft my simple heart betray'd ;
 No more she should my mind trepan,
 Could I but win sweet Mary Ann.

IV.

Ye misers boast your hoarded gold,
 I envy not your sums untold ;
 My wealth, my happiness, my plan,
 Is all comprized in Mary Ann.

CHAP. II.

Mr. Williams writes to her without success—he asks her father's consent to court her—he consults his daughter, who declares her dislike of him—with other matters necessary to be known for the better understanding this history.

MR. Williams had no more success with his poetry, than he had with his eloquence ; he still avoided his presence, yet he still continued

nued his visits. One day when she had left the parlour on his appearance, he laid the following letter on the table, and went away. As this epistle was unsealed, she had curiosity enough to read it, the contents were as follows:

To Miss MARY ANN EDWARDS.

" My dear Miss EDWARDS,

I am a stranger to the cause of your indifference to me, as my person, I flatter myself, is not disagreeable, my education has been liberal, and my fortune is not small; the respect your parents bear me I was in hopes would have had some effect on the mind of their daughter, and inclined her in my favor; not that I would place my reliance on that, but try every method I could to render myself agreeable, but alas! my perseverance has hitherto been in vain.

Perhaps my former follies have been magnified to you, by some who deal in slander, and strive to ruin the reputation of others. I do assure you, my dear angel, whatever they have been, I have banished them all: I must have been insensible to the charms of beauty, virtue, and good sense, not to have loved, nay, adored you; believe me most charming Mary Ann, I am no infidel, but a true votary to your divinity, whose benigness alone can make me happy, you are all I wish, all I admire and reverence, and all my present and future happiness depends on your kindness; you are my very existence;
I cannot

I cannot live without you ; and, I vow by all that is sacred, I will with truth and honour, love, cherish, and attend you with every service in my power, my dear, dear creature ! pity my passion, and let me have a favorable answer to this wild and incoherent letter ; and believe me, sincerely
your's,

J. WILLIAMS."

When she had perused this strange performance, she was at a loss for some time how to act ; she thought it would not be prudent to write, and yet to be silent, might give him liberty to entertain thoughts which were not to her liking ; so, after mature deliberation, she sat down and wrote the following answer :

" SIR,

I have perused your romantic epistle, and am very sorry if your disorder is as violent as you would have me think : at present, I have to inform you, I am an utter stranger to the passions of love ; I must own I have noticed your assiduity towards me, and shall be glad if you would discontinue it. Perhaps, like my sex, I may be pleased with a little flattery ; yet, I assure you, I am thoroughly convinced I am a mere mortal and no divinity, therefore cannot accept of your worship. I hope this plain dealing will have its desired effect, and be of service towards your cure ; and though I cannot give your hopes any relief, yet you may believe I wish you well ; and
am your humble servant,

M. A. EDWARDS."

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This letter was delivered to him by a servant; he read it over several times, and kissed it as often, on account of the person who wrote it, though its contents were far from being to his satisfaction; he smiled, raved, stamped, and behaved like a madman; at length he sat down, and let fall a shower of tears, which gave him a momentary relief; but his hopes were as far off as before, unless, when he considered her assertion, that at present she was an utter stranger to love; and lovers, like a drowning person, will catch at a rush; so he concluded, that although she was a stranger as yet to the passion of love, she might not always be so.

Miss Edwards said the truth when she made that declaration, and that there was little likelihood of her becoming a victim to the little blind god. As she grew coquetish in her disposition, and was pleased with the adulation of every coxcomb, yet her heart was not touched with the least sensibility.

Mr. Williams now resolved to let her father know his passion, and to solicit his permission to pay his respects to her in an honorable way, and had not the least doubt of his consent, as he was well acquainted with his circumstances; accordingly he informed the old gentleman of the state of his mind.

Mr. Edwards told him he had not the least objection to an alliance with him; but as his daughter's happiness was a very material point with him, it was absolutely necessary to consult her inclinations, on a matter which so nearly concerned

concerned her future welfare ; at the same time promised to break the affair to her as soon as possible, and let him know the result. Mr. Williams now took his leave, and waited with the utmost anxiety for the next day, when he was to know his doom.

Mr. Edwards, with a true fatherly fondness, told his daughter what had passed between Mr. Williams and himself, and begged she would consider of the matter, and let him know her resolves.

Mary Ann replied, her resolution on that head was already formed, and that Mr. Williams was acquainted with it. She then shewed him his letter and her answer to it, as near as she could recollect. This was a part of the business which Mr. Williams had thought proper to conceal, and which Mr. Edwards resented in such a manner, that he instantly sent the following note:

" SIR,

You have used me in an ungentleman-like manner, by underhandedly endeavouring to engage my daughter's affections, without my knowledge ; therefore, I hope you will no longer trouble my house with your visits, as they are entirely disagreeable to me, as well as my daughter.

EDWARDS."

This note was worse than a dagger would have been to his heart ; he threw himself on a chair, and was insensible for some time ; at last, he rose and went out and walked, not knowing

where he went; when wandering in the fields, he came to the side of a river; here the idea of suicide firmly came across his mind, and without considering the consequence of so rash an action, he plunged into the water, and would inevitably have perished, had not a labourer, who was at work at some distance, seen him, who immediately ran to the place, and with a prong hauled him by the coat out of the river; he was quite insensible, and had swallowed a great quantity of water, which, as the man had prudence enough to lift him up by the heels, he discharged, but yet continued to all appearance dead; the man laid him with his face downwards on the grass, and went into the village for assistance; among the rest who came, were two of Mr. Edwards's men, who immediately took him home to his own house. The alarm was immediately spread through the neighbourhood, that Mr. Williams had drowned himself; and the note Mr. Edwards sent being found in his pocket, the cause of this rash action was easily guessed, and some hints were dropped about pride, scorn, and so forth, which were not very agreeable in the ears, of Mr. or Miss Edwards, who could not bear the thoughts of its being supposed that pride on their side had any share in it; shocked that such a circumstance should happen, and to a person whom they had been so intimate with, they determined to quit the place as privately as possible, which they did, and went to to a place not far from Bath, where they lived as retired as possible, which was not altogether so agreeable to

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to the gay temper of Miss Mary Ann, who longed for nothing so much as to be admired.

CHAP. III.

Mr. Williams's recovery—his behaviour—Miss Mary Ann's behaviour at Bath—she falls in love with Capt. B——d, the consequences, &c.

MR. Williams, having proper applications, recovered from the appearance of being dead, but was quite disordered in his mind, and was seized with a violent fever, which the physicians concluded would be his death.

But youth and a strong constitution, were too much for death and the doctor; Mr. Williams gradually grew better, but though his health returned, his reason still seemed unsettled; his first enquiry was about Mary Ann, which not a little surprized those about him, as during his illness he had never mentioned her name; when he was informed that she and her parents had left the country, he became almost as mad as when in his fever; he ordered his horse to be saddled, charged his pistols, mounted, and rode with full speed, he could not tell where; two of his faithful servants followed him at a distance, to prevent any mischief which might happen from so unsettled a state of mind.

At present we must leave him to his pursuits, and look a little after the lady, who is the principal figure in this history.

Mr. Edwards and his wife observed, that Mary Ann's temper was much altered from what it was,

was, that the once sensible, gay, agreeable girl, was become mute and morose, peevish and full of spleen, who used to be pleased with every thing, and concluding that this alteration proceeded from the behaviour of Mr. Williams, they determined to relieve the disorder, or at least prevent its further progress, by amusing her with every thing which might produce that happy change in her mind they wished for.

Bath, the universal world of pleasure, was so near, that no other could be thought of, and the proposals being made, she very modestly consented to accompany her parents wherever they thought proper.

This affectionate proof of her duty (for so the fond parents thought it) revived their hearts, every thing was got in readiness, and the day being appointed, off they set, and soon gained that earthly Paradise, where fashion, with the whole train of dissipation, keep their variegated court.

Here Mary Ann soon wiped the cloud from her brow, and every day became more cheerful. But let the reader be informed, that Miss E. new inwards, though young and innocent, had some little female cunning in her, for she thought nothing about Williams, whether he was dead or alive, but had artfully sham'd fullness and melancholy, that her parents might take notice of it, and try the very means they did to remove the disorder.

Her thirst for admiration made her think Bath would afford her all her heart could desire,

very well knew she was but a few miles from it, and to be so near the tree and not taste of the fruit, seemed to her mind quite *outré*, as the French call it.

Yet, for her to have mentioned it first, would have shewn a levity in her mind, which she did not wish her parents to think she possessed.

When a lady of sixteen will deceive and cajole, who will she practise on next? Her lover to be sure.

Well, being arrived at Bath, and in possession of genteel apartments, with all the accommodations which money could procure, after a few days rest to recover from the fatigue of their long journey, of about six miles; at last Miss, with her guardian angels, her mother and aunt, made her appearance in the pump-room: her morning dress was elegant, neat and fanciful, and she shewed the whole of her form and beauty to the best advantage. The whisper ran round the room, who is she? who is she? Various conjectures were made, but they were nothing but conjectures, for no one at present could tell really who she was.

Some of the gay males would have her to be a new initiated courtesan, who had left London under the protection of two Lady Abbesses, to try what her beauty would do at Bath; but this was soon given up, as she had not taken up her abode among the impure, but in one of those lodging-houses which are distinguished for their propriety, in accommodating none but the chaste.

Whatever

Whatever the men did, the ladies beheld he with envy, as all the *beau monde* moved in a circle round this new star, which seemed as just discovered in the firmament of beauty, and left their former goddesses totally neglected.

Now Miss Edwards exulted; she enjoyed her desire of being admired, or envied; and envy Mr. Gay says, is a kind of praise.

Yet, if she saw with the eyes of understanding she would have dropped her pursuit of conquest, and retired with the glory she had already won, at the thoughts of seeing so many once brilliant toasts so suddenly neglected on her appearance; but alas! vanity sees nothing but what is pleasing to itself.

She might with justice suppose, that in course of time her fate might be the same; some new face, after her's had been familiar for some time, would attract the changeable multitude, and she be neglected in turn; but blind to truth, and deaf to the voice of reason, she thought of nothing but making conquests, not with an inclination to keep them, but to extend the name of her beauty.

Her name being at length known, her toilet was crouded with billet-doux, verses, sonnets, and the tickling insinuations of flattery; this was charming, she could reckon no less than twenty who were slaves in her train, but could they have had their will, they would have been tyrants, instead of slaves.

She now moved on swimmingly in the ocean of fascination, and her parents beheld the amazing alteration

alteration in her temper, with delight and surprise, not knowing the real cause from whence it sprung.

But Love is a wanton god, and withholds his power for a while, to make his arrows more sure, and their wounds more poignant.

Mary Ann's heart as yet, was a stranger to the tender passion; but it was not long to remain so. As "there is a tide in the affairs of men," (as Shakespeare says) so there is a tide in the affairs of love.

For Captain B—d, an officer of real fortune, and polite education, a man of fashion and gallantry, with a person and carriage, by nature formed to captivate the fair, made his appearance at the rooms; his polite behaviour to the ladies in general, made him universally admired; but his particular attention to Miss Edwards, soon made a conquest of that heart, which had before appeared invulnerable.

Her person and accomplishments had likewise made him, for the first time, a slave to beauty and fine sense; however, as he was a man who scorned to dangle after a coquet (as he perceived plainly she was) he made enquiry who she was, and finding her family so ranked with gentility, and her fortune would be considerable, he made no more to do of the matter, but waited on Mr. Edwards, and told him the sentiments of his mind; that his inclinations were towards the young lady on honorable terms; that his fortune was ample and independent, and, with his
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permission, he would visit the lady, to try if he could win her affections ; as yet, he had not said a syllable to her on the score of love.

The father was not a little pleased with the honorable and delicate manner of the captain's conduct, and freely gave him leave to visit her, on condition, that if he found her averse, he should desist, and not persecute, if it was not agreeable.

This agreed to, and a day was appointed for his first visit, and Mary Ann was prepared to receive him as a lover.

What Miss Edwards felt on this occasion may be easily guessed ; her heart palpitated in a manner she before was a stranger to, but more of that in another place, and for the present, let us look after poor Mr. Williams.

CHAP. IV.

Williams's arrival—a letter—the effects—Introduction of Captain B——d, to Miss Edwards—letters on both sides, and other matters.

WILLIAMS, it may be remembered, set out on horseback, with his pistols loaded ; what he intended, we may suppose was yet in embryo ; or, as king Lear says, “ I will do such deeds, what they are, I know not, but they shall be the terrors of the earth.”

If there be a thing called chance, it now plainly distinguishes its power, by conducting Williams,
(through

(through ways to him unknown) to the place he wished to be ; namely, where his beloved Mary Ann was, to Bath, riding like a madman, o'er cross roads, from county to county, seldom taking rest, or refreshment of any kind, and for several weeks together, till, by a mere accident, he arrived at Bath.

Here, of a sudden, he seemed to re-assume his reason, and join in the pleasures of the place ; but this was all artifice, as there is a cunning sometimes belonging to madness, which men, in their sober understanding, would not have thought on.

This was it ; he truly and justly considered, that if he appeared in a disordered state of mind, he should not be admitted into any public place, where he could only hope to find the object of his wishes.

This did not seem the result of a madman, and yet, he was in fact no better ; he was as artful in his enquiries, as yet not knowing that she was there, but he soon discovered that she was, and where she lodged, though he knew nothing of the courtship of Captain B——d.

To see her in public, he likewise thought would be wrong, as he knew he could not bear the shock he should sustain on her appearance ; he therefore determined to write to her, in the most tender and pathetic terms ; likewise, to apologize to her father for what he had supposed was done underhandedly ; which was, he declared, merely forgetfulness.

Accordingly, he got the following letter delivered to her, the servant not knowing from whence it came; otherwise it would not have been received.

“DEAR MISS,

“You will pardon my presumption in daring once more to address you, notwithstanding your father’s prohibition to the contrary; to love you is presumption, and is not easily denied; I have almost suffered death for you, yet I cannot give you up; by accident I have found out your place of residence, and humbly implore you will once more admit me to your presence, and inform your father I never had an idea of insulting him, which I can with ease satisfy him of; beg of him to let me see you, and let not my hopes be for ever frustrated, by receiving once more to your favor, a forlorn creature, who must ever remain miserable, unless you have compassion on him; my dearest Mary Ann, pardon my pursuit of you and permit me at least, to lay my life at your feet; your sincere, yet despairing lover,

J. WILLIAMS.

That things happen strange and unforeseen, we all know, and sometimes to cause strange revolutions in the minds and tempers of people, as well as in the state. To make this matter clear it will be necessary here to relate, that Captain B—d had paid his first visit to Miss Edwards, and was received with that decent regard which maidens should ever preserve in things of the kind.

kind, making it seem as though it was more in compliance to the command of her parents, than any wish of her own; yet, for all this, there was something in her manner, and confusion, which made the Captain plainly perceive he was not disagreeable to her; he improved on what he thought, and, in an insinuating and tender manner of behaviour, prevailed with her to let an epistolary correspondence take place, which she consented to, and that very afternoon he wrote to her as follows:

To Miss MARY ANN EDWARDS.

“MY DEAR MISS,

“Since the happiness I experienced in your company this morning, and your kindness in permitting the liberty to write to you, I could not rest easy till I had made use of the privilege you so graciously granted me; indeed, I must confess, that (unless I was in your company) I could write to you every hour, yet, am such a novice, as not to be able to express my thoughts to my own satisfaction; your beauty is beyond description, as is your understanding; your delicacy in every thing charms me, and every time I think of you, my love encreases; and till the time shall come which unites us at the altar of Hymen, I shall be unhappy; but, when that time comes, the happiest of mortals: I beg, dear Miss, you will wear the ring I send you as a token of my respect, as my love is too unbounded to send you trifles; with the best wishes for

for your health and happiness, believe me, dear Miss, to be sincerely your lover,

T. B——D."

Miss received this letter with the utmost rapture, and being by herself, kissed it several times, and then sat down to write an answer: she couched it in the following terms:

To Captain B——D.

"DEAR SIR,

"I acknowledge the receipt of your polite epistle, but must blush to think of the many unmerited compliments you have paid me, and am unable to make a suitable return on my part; I cannot think I exceed the bounds of modesty, when I confess you stand fairest in my opinion of any man I have yet seen; I accept your ring as a valuable present, which you call a trifle, though as handsome a brilliant as any lady need to wear: by sending you, Sir, this answer, I hope you will not construe my willingness to oblige you into boldness; but believe me to be, Sir, your humble servant,

MARY ANN EDWARDS."

The servant, who was called to carry this letter to the Captain, at the same time delivered Mr. Williams's to Miss, she supposing it came from some other of her lovers, as many took the liberty of writing without permission and without her answering them; she opened it and read the contents, not a little surpris'd to find it came from

from Williams, and more so, to understand he was so near; having read it, she folded it up and laid it upon the table in order for her father to read it when he came in, he being gone to take a walk; she had not sent the letter to the Captain before that impatient lover arrived: being shewed into the parlour, having seated himself by her, kissed her fair hand, he cast his eye upon the letter to her, and took it up; she was going to take it herself, but he was too quick for her; she did not think it worth while to hinder his reading it, which he did, and shewed evident marks of dissatisfaction and jealousy, muttering as he read it—“*admit me to your presence once more, my dear Mary Ann.*”

The reason of these ejaculations the reader will understand, that although he knew she was coquetishly inclined, yet he did not suspect she had ever a serious and honorable lover permitted to visit her: at this juncture her father came in, and Mary Ann presented Williams's letter to him and immediately quitted the room: Mr. Edwards having read it, and observing a cloudiness on the Captain's brow, guessed he had read it also, therefore thought proper to explain the whole matter to him; he blamed the conduct of Williams for proceeding without Mr. Edwards's consent, and likewise Mary Ann, for answering his letter at any rate; as supposing, among her numerous train of admirers, she might answer their billets, which would give them an opportunity to make some believe they had received favors

favors from her, for there are as many male co-quets, as females, who write on purpose to boast of being admired by the ladies; but if once they possess a line of their writing, if it was written on purpose to expose their insolence, they will contrive to turn it to their disadvantage, and cast a slur on the most innocent characters.

The Captain took leave without saying any more. He went home and wrote the following letter to Mary Ann.

“DEAR MISS,

“The letter I read this morning while with you, has given me some uneasiness, notwithstanding, your father has, I believe, impartially stated the whole affair, yet, I have some doubts; he expresses himself in so warm a manner, that I fear you have, by some unguarded expression, given him leave to hope for success, as his passion seems so violent, if so, you have done wrong: I beg you will be sincere and recollect every circumstance, as you will determine me how to act: if you have given hopes, I must pity him and blame you; but, if I find it otherwise, I shall find him out and chastise him for his boldness.

I am your's, sincerely,

T. B——D.”

Miss having received this epistle, without consulting her father, returned the following answer:

To Captain B——D.

“SIR,

“Our acquaintance has been so short and our connections so trifling, that I do not think my-
self

self under any obligation; to give you an explanation in regard to my former conduct; of which, from the letter you read, you may put what constructions you please,

Your's,

M. A. EDWARDS."

This she sent by the servant who always carried her messages.

CHAP. V.

A duel between the Captain and Williams—the latter gets wounded—Mary Ann elopes and cannot be found—a letter from Williams to Mr. Edwards—the Captain goes in search of the run away.

THE captain received this epistle with some chagrin; he considered it as an insult on his honorable behaviour to Miss Edwards and her father, yet considered them as in a manner innocent to what Williams was; therefore, he determined to find him out, and vent his fury on one who was almost mad already, and consequently, not fearful of death; he found him at a coffee-house where he had appointed the answer to his letter; instead of which, he had no other satisfaction than his own letter returned in a cover: on the captain's enquiry for his name he answered himself; when calling him aside, he told him he must relinquish all pretensions to Miss Edwards, or immediately give him the satisfaction of a gentleman, using at the same time

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some expressions that were aggravating: Williams took fire-arms and bid him to lead on and he would follow, and they got into the fields as soon as possible, and drawing their swords, after two or three lunges, Williams was wounded in the side.

The people of the coffee-house suspecting there was something more than common in their hasty retreat from thence, soon followed, attended by a great many of the town's people, who came too late to prevent the mischief.

Williams was carried to the hotel, and a surgeon sent for, who declared the wound very dangerous; the Captain thought proper to retire till he knew rightly how the matter would turn out; this business soon raged like the sudden flames of fire all over the city, and Miss Edwards's name was treated very freely, on account of her coquetry.

Mr. Edwards was very uneasy, as this was the second time that Williams had risked his life on account of his daughter; as to the captain, he considered him in a very ticklish situation; likewise, if Williams's wound should prove mortal, all these circumstances, with the severe lampoons will be thrown on the conduct of his daughter, which made him almost mad; he knew not how to act; to leave Williams in his present situation would be a barbarity, which would cast dishonor on his character as a man, and as to the Captain, he knew not where to find him, and if he did, it would not be prudent to visit him.

In

In this dilemma, the first thing which occurred to him as proper, was to send his daughter to a relation in London, where she might live privately, until the noise was blown over.

This resolution, which he intended to put in execution the next morning, having ordered the coach to be got ready, and it being at the gate by five o'clock, to prevent the staring of the people, he went himself to his daughter's chamber to see if she was ready, according to his directions on the over-night.

But what was his amazement to find she was gone! he called up the maid who attended her, but she knew nothing of the matter, nor did any of the servants, nor could it be discovered at which door she went out: this was a terrible stroke to her father, mother and aunt, who, for a while, seemed to sit like Niobe, all tears.

Mr. Edwards recovered first from his trance, and went into the town himself, and sent all the servants different ways, but no tidings could be heard of her; they all concluded she had made away with herself; people were sent to search all the rivers, brooks and ponds, but to no purpose; which however, produced this effect, that they had hopes she was living, and had rambled to some cottage where she might hide herself for a while, or get them to guide her to some place where she was intended to go, fearing her being seen, if she went by day-light from Bath.

But all this was conjecture, until Mr. Edwards received the following letter:

GOOD

"GOOD SIR,

"I thank God I am pronounced out of danger, which you may inform Captain B——d of; at the same time desire you will come and see me, as I have something to say to you; inclosed is a note I received this morning from your daughter.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. WILLIAMS."

Mr. Edwards was not a little surpris'd at this note, but had not leisure to guess what he had to communicate, so eager they were to read their daughter's, which was as follows:

"MR. WILLIAMS,

"I am very sorry to think that you have suffered so much on my account, and own, with shame, that much of it has been owing to my imprudent conduct, particularly, in not telling my father without answering your first letter to me, and next, by answering Captain E——d's in the manner I did, which made him seek revenge on you; but my unthinking fondness of having many admirers, hurried me from folly to folly without consideration, and if it will be of any comfort to you, I promise never to marry at all, as I have taken the resolution to get over to the continent, and put myself into a convent, and have taken effectual means not to be hindered of my intention; there I can reflect on my past follies, my vanities and the mischief which I
made

made by such vain conduct, and weep, and pray for forgiveness: send this to my disconsolate friends, that they may know that I have not made away with myself, as they might otherwise conjecture: Adieu, and forget that I ever existed.

M. A. EDWARDS."

They were all surprised at this strange resolution, but knew not how to prevent it.

Mr. Edwards however, according to Mr. Williams's request, went to see that unhappy man: the curtains were undrawn when he entered the room, and Mr. Williams seeing him, held out his hand to shake, which Mr. Edwards did very cordially, and set down by the bed side, when Mr. Williams began thus—

"My good friend and father, as I once hoped you might be, but heaven has thought otherwise, and I must submit to the will of providence: my life has been twice saved by that power which hitherto I have thought so little of, but I see my error, and will be penitent: but O! good Sir, use every means to recover your daughter; let her not be lost to the world; find her and bring her back to the man she loves, and I shall be happy."

He then raised himself up as well as he could in the bed, and leaning on one arm, said—"I have something particular to say."

Just as he was going to proceed, the surgeon and Captain B——d entered the chamber, on which he laid down, Mr. Williams, it seems, had

had desired the surgeon to call on Captain B——d and let him know he was out of danger, for Captain B——d had let the surgeon know where he was to be found, ever since the duel had happened, and had now been to fetch him : Captain B——d shook hands with Mr. Williams, and asked him to forgive the impetuosity of his passion, which had drove him beyond the bounds of reason ; Mr. Williams replied, if he had killed him he had deserved his death from him, but not on account of his love for Miss Edwards, but from a worse cause.

All were astonished at this declaration, and Captain B——d begged he would explain what he meant.

Mr. Williams replied, "I will if I have strength ; you may remember, Sir, some few years back, a young student of Oxford, a stranger, who came with a relation of yours to see your uncle, with whom he was acquainted ; I was that stranger, and with your other relation, by your uncle's desire, staid a week with him ; your uncle's daughter was at home, young, sensible, and lovely as the days in summer ; I cast my lascivious eyes upon her ; I had art, she simplicity."

Here Captain B——d started up, and walked with hasty strides backward and forward across the room, biting his lips and grasping his sword.

Mr. Williams desired he would be calm and hear the story out ; the surgeon and Mr. Edwards did the same, and he was prevailed upon again to sit down, and Mr. Williams proceeded—

"I,

"I, by my practices, won upon her gentle nature; and having invited her to an innocent party of pleasure, as I told her, took her to a house which I had prepared for my purposes, and by fair speeches and false promises, I gained the full possession of my wishes."

Here Captain B—d rose again, but was again prevailed upon to sit down.

"I staid with her about a month, (said Mr. Williams,) and to deceive her father, prevailed upon her to write that she was gone to see an aunt in London, in company with those friends she at first set out with, and was in safe company; but what would she not have granted then to the man who had ruined her, and had promised to marry her, though he never intended it.

"Having cloyed my appetite, I pretended business, and kept away at first a week, and then a month, leaving her at a farm-house, with a scanty pittance to maintain her in that elegant style in which she had been brought up and used to. I, villian as I was, told these honest people she had been a London wanton that I had taken a fancy to, and had a mind to keep her a little while to myself, and she would return to her sisterhood in town.

"This made them lift up their hands and eyes when they first saw her, to think that such youth and beauty should become the prey to prostitution; indeed they would hardly believe me; but they were obliged to think as I bid them, as the farm was mine, and I could distress them whenever

ever I thought proper ; they told me when I began to go but seldom, that she was continually weeping and could hardly be prevailed on to take necessary sustenance. I replied, she wanted to be among her debauched companions in town, and she should go shortly, and indeed I wonder I did not take her there, for at that time I was capable of any thing that was bad.

“ However, one day when I went to see her, she told me that she was with child, and begged I would fulfil my promise and marry her ; I told her I would as soon as convenient, that I was not yet independent, and my father, on the knowledge of such a rash step, might disinherit me. I begged she would go home and I would come and break the matter to her father and gain his consent that she might lie in privately, till things should be ripe for our perfect union.

“ She fell on her knees, and lifting up her hands to heaven, made a vow never to go home, or see father, mother, or any relation, till her honor now blemished should be made whole by that sacred ceremony, or that they should hear of her any more while she lived, as she would change her name ; I very unfeelingly replied, she might use her pleasure, and turning on my heel, left her in a situation which would melt a heart of stone, but it had no effect on me at that time ; but the next day I sent a coach to take her, she did not know where, nor did she care, as I believe she began to think me a villain. I sent her to a place decent enough for some sort of

of people, where she laid-in about three years ago, and has a fine boy I am told; but I have never been to see that or her: I allow her a small stipend to support herself and the child, which I take care shall be regularly paid; but neither her father nor any of her relations know any thing of her.

“ Lastly, whether it was owing to my head being disordered, or to the stings of my guilty conscience, I know not, but I thought her apparition went through my chamber; it looked at me in bed and smiled, and I waked in the utmost horrors; since which time I have longed to see you, that I might make this confession, and declare my resolution to marry her as soon as I am able.”

“ As you behave in that respect, (said the Captain,) expect my future friendship and forgiveness, and if you fail, my detestation and revenge.”

Mr. Williams, by all that was sacred, vowed he would fulfil what he had promised, and gave them a direction where they might send for her, to be with him till he should be able to go to church with her, or if they were willing (for fear of a relapse) in his present state of health, the ceremony might be authorized to be performed in the chamber.

Every one present applauded his resolution, and rejoiced in his conversion, and Mr. Edwards was for having the marriage performed as soon as the lady arrived.

E

Captain

Captain B——d took him by the hand and called him father, as he thought he should now soon be united to his dear Mary Ann.

But he did not know how far that was off, till Mr. Edwards gave him her letter to read; this confounded him; no one could inform him which way she went; but he was determined immediately to pursue her, and take the route to Dover; he immediately had post-horses sent to him, and that very night set out with all possible speed; where we shall leave him for the present, and conclude this chapter.

CHAP. VI.

The marriage of Mr. Williams—Captain B——d's search after Miss Edwards—his finding her—returns to Mr. Edwards's own house—their marriage, and the conclusion.

MR. WILLIAMS having sent for his intended wife and the child, Mr. Edwards sent for his wife and her sister to be present on their being married, as there was plenty of room in the house to accommodate them, and she was not expected before the next day.

Mr. Williams having unburthented his mind of the load which weighed upon it, grew more cheerful, and eat as hearty as the physician would give him leave. The company of Mrs. Edwards and her sister at first caused some little confusion, as they had all been so intimately acquainted;

quainted; but they, having heard his whole story, likewise joined in his praise, for having conquered his unruly passions, and become a convert from vice to virtue.

But as the repetition of such things must be very disagreeable, they changed the discourse to other subjects of a more general tendency, and continued very happy all the evening.

Mr. Williams was an excellent companion, and much of a gentleman, having sacrificed not a little to the graces; he had a musical tongue, a fluency of speech, and an easy manner of delivery, which made his eloquence attended to, particularly by the ladies.

To this cause perhaps it may be owing, he was so successful in his amours with the fair sex, many of whom he ruined, by their own consent.

All his agreeableness seemed now returning to him, and it appeared more amiable, as it proceeded from a better heart than he ever before possessed.

When supper was over, the company retired to their apartments, after wishing Mr. Williams a good night; and I have heard him say, he never enjoyed a sweeter repose in all his life, and this rest gave him fresh strength, so that the next day, by the surgeon's permission, he rose for the first time since his illness.

All the company breakfasted together, and were as happy as the over-night. About noon was the time the lady was expected; a letter had been sent by the person who went in the coach

to fetch her, which gave her some account of the reason for which she was to come.

At length the time arrived, and she was conducted into the room, with a sweet little boy about three years of age: it is impossible to describe the confusion of Mr. Williams; his eyes were cast on the ground, and he stood motionless as a statue, while poor Fanny, (for that was her name) as she was going to embrace him, fainted upon him, and if Mr. Edwards had not accidentally been behind to support them, they must have fallen together on the floor.

As to words there was not one to be found between them; it was all dumb eloquence; but such as words cannot describe. At length, after having cried, saluted and embraced each other for a considerable time, they seated themselves, and seemed as ashamed of what they had been doing; but the heart of sensibility will never turn to ridicule the most delicate feelings of the human mind.

After a little ceremony, they became more like people of the world, and conversed in a rational manner. The licence being provided, and the proper persons being present, the marriage ceremony was performed, and an excellent entertainment provided on the occasion. Never were more sincere rejoicings than on the present festival; each were alike obliging and obliged; the bells were set a ringing, and plenty of ale was given to the populace, who made bonfires on the occasion; indeed the festivity continued
till

till the morning appeared to light them to bed, and the day took place of the night.

This ceremony being completed, the new made bride expressed her wishes to see her parents, to whom she had been so long a lost child; but what account to give of her being so long away rather puzzled them; when the good-natured Mr. Edwards offered his services, and desired that all the company should go together, and he would take the parents aside, and tell the story as it really was; which, however the first part might affect them, he was certain the end must afford the most permanent delight: the proposal was acceded to; though Mrs. Williams was at first a little uneasy at the past; yet necessity soon reconciled the matter.

They accordingly all set off together in different carriages; Mr. and Mrs. Edwards sighing for fear Captain B——d should not be successful in finding the retreat of Mary Ann; but considering the vigilance of a lover, they again had confidence he would succeed. Thus they were alternately possessed with hope and fear, till at length they arrived at the house of Mrs. Williams's father.

The family were surprised to see three coaches with company, stop at the door, which, on their ringing, was immediately opened, and the company conducted into a spacious parlour, where Mr. and Mrs. B——d soon came; but who can express their astonishment at seeing their long lost Fanny again? Another scene of tenderness
now

now took place between the parents and the child, which, as it may be guessed, was affecting, we shall not attempt to describe; suffice it to say, that Mr. Edwards discharged his office with friendly sense and happy effect, so that all parties were amicable and contented. Having dwelt so long upon this subject, it is high time to seek after Captain B——d, and his success in pursuing the run-away Mary Ann.

The first port he made enquiry at was Dover, but could not gain the least gleam of intelligence, he then went to Deal, Hythe, Sandwich, Brighton, and all round that coast, but in vain; he then thought she might go to Harwich, to go for Holland or Ostend, where he intended to proceed the next morning; but being quite fatigued, he put up at an inn to refresh himself, and have a few hours sleep.

And here it may be necessary to be known to the reader, that his pursuit might have for ever been in vain, if chance had not brought to light what he would in all likelihood never have had an idea of; but things happen strangely and wonderfully too, as will appear presently.

Mary Ann did not stay till the morning before she left her father's lodging at Bath, she went out when she pretended to go to bed; after she went up stairs, she put on a long coat, took a handkerchief with some trifling necessaries and what money she had, and went out the back way, being so disguised that none could know her: she went towards Bath-Easton, where she got a
returned

returned post-chaise, which was going to the Devizes, where she next morning took the stage for London; there she equipped herself in a suit of boy's cloaths, disposed of her own, and in another stage was proceeding towards Dover; but was taken ill of a very bad fever, in which she had a great deal of difficulty to conceal her sex; and at last was obliged to bribe the maid to keep her secret, pretending she was in love, and had made use of that disguise to seek after her sweetheart, who she said she heard was in France. The girl was fond of romantic stories, believed her, and got her all the help she could, by having a physician to her: it was at this inn where she lay ill, that Captain B——d had put up to refresh himself; and while he was giving orders for supper, the maid who attended on her came into the kitchen with a letter in her hand, which she desired might be put in the post as soon as convenient: "I don't know where it is going, but you may read the direction, ma'am, he desires it may not be forgotten, as he thinks himself well enough to pursue his journey to-morrow."

Captain B——d casting his eyes by accident, more than curiosity, over the direction, found, to his great surprise, it was directed to himself; he eagerly seized and opened it, while the maid said, "Sir, you must not open the gentleman's letter;" "yes, my dear child, (said he) I may, for the letter is for me;" accordingly he read as follows:

"Dear

“ Dear Captain B——d,

“ I should be ashamed of what I have now written, but I never intend to see you any more. I own I loved you as dear as my own life, but my folly made me send you the answer I did, which encouraged yours; for which and other follies, I am determined to immure myself in a cloister; renounce the world and all its vanities. Farewell, be happy with another, and forget me.

“ M. A. EDWARDS.”

The Captain having read this, ordered fresh horses to be put to the chaise immediately, and bid the maid conduct him to the chamber where the youth was; she obeyed with fear and trembling: when he entered the room she was sitting at a table where she had just wrote the letter, and turning her head as the door opened, she saw the Captain and fainted away, but soon recovered, proper means being used: he then bid her not to be afraid, that he had too great a regard for her virtue to offer any injury to it; but to preserve decorum, he bid the maid stay in the room, while he told all that had happened, and once more reconciled her to the world. They eat a bit of supper in the chamber, and got the faithful maid to procure her some women's apparel. Having settled at the inn, and the chaise with four horses being ready, they set off, and never stopped, but for fresh horses, till they arrived at her father's house, where were assembled Mr. and Mrs. Williams, with their fathers

Like Mary Ann coquets you'll find in plenty,
Who think of lovers they've a right to twenty;
Such folly often mischief makes, you'll find,
Choose out a man of sense, to him be kind.
Tho' you're possess'd of beauty and of sense,
To be admir'd by all's impertinence.



A

THE
FORTUNATE GYPSEY;
OR, THE
YOUNG LADY
TURNED
FORTUNE-TELLER.

A GENTLEMAN who was formerly a merchant in the city of London, and had acquired a considerable estate, withdrew into the country, having spent his younger years in the noise and hurry of business, resolved now to enjoy the fruits of his labour in quiet; and having a fair house in the country, he inclined to fix there: but that he might not be out of all concern of business in the world, he still kept some ventures

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ventures abroad, which he called the poor's stock. This gentleman at his death, left one only daughter, called Christiana, to whom he gave a very great fortune, and committed the care of her person, and management of her estate, to two gentlemen, her guardians. She was now about eight years old, when she desired she might go to see her uncle, a gentleman of fair reputation and good estate in the country, which they granted, and sent her over, attended with two servants. After she had been there a month, her uncle, who was a passionate man, catching her in some fault, threatened to whip her; she farther provoking him with some scurvy reply, he did so; at which time, as she cried out, she was heard to say (by some of the neighbours) "O pray uncle don't kill me," which neither he nor any of the family took notice of at that time. The next morning early she stole out of the house, and after she had wandered some hours, not knowing whether to go, met with a company of gypsies, who took her up, made much of her, changing her cloaths, and staining her complexion, brought her with them to London, and from thence went their rounds into the country. The uncle missing his niece the next day, made all possible enquiry after her, but could not receive any account of her. He next sent to her guardians to know if she was returned home, but meeting with no satisfaction, concluded that some young gentleman, who knew she would be a great fortune, had stolen her. This the guardians believed too, till some of the neighbours at a gossiping, were heard to

say, that the night before the child was missing, she cried out lamentably, " Pray uncle don't kill me," of which the guardians were informed, and considered it an odd circumstance, to happen just the night before; and asked these gossiping women, if they could safely take their oaths of it, and would do so before a magistrate? who said—yes, it was all true, and nothing but the truth. After some deliberation, they acquainted the uncle with what his neighbours said, and how nearly it touched his reputation now, and might his life hereafter, if his niece was not found. Upon this all the ponds and rivers were searched, and a considerable reward promised to any person that could give any account of her dead or alive. No news being heard of her, the neighbours began for to grumble, and said, that the guardians and uncle had compleated to murder the child, and share her estate. This being now grown a public discourse in the country, to the great disadvantage of their reputations, the guardians resolved to prosecute the uncle as far as the law directed them. Accordingly they went and sent for him to a gentleman's house, who was a justice of the peace: being altogether, the guardians complained to the justice of this report, and desired that he would take cognizance of it as far as the law required. The justice sent for the witnesses, who swore positively, that the immediate night before she was missing, they heard her cry out with a lamentable voice, " Pray uncle don't kill me." Upon which, the justice bound

bound the uncle in recognizance of two thousand pounds to appear at the next assizes, and the guardians in a bond of five hundred pounds to prosecute the uncle. He, in his tedious search after his niece Christiana, finds a poor man's daughter in another country, who both in age, features, and complexion, so much resembled her, that at first sight he thought she had been really the same. Now says he to himself,—if I can get this girl of her parents, and dress her in the same habit Christiana wore, she will appear to be the very same, nor have I any other course to save my life; he accordingly did so, and for a sum of money bought the girl of her poor relations, and diligently taught her in the part she was to act. A day or two before the assize, he gave out he had by great fortune found his niece, brings her home to his house, with her real father and mother, who gave a satisfactory account to all persons how accidentally they found her in a wood, almost starved. The girl owned how she stole away for fear her uncle should whip her again as he threatened, and the romance hung so well together, that the guardians believed the same, and nobody questioned the truth. At the assizes he was called to appear, which accordingly he did; the judge asked him for his niece Christiana, if she was found yet?—Yes, my lord, says the gentleman, she's in court—Very well, says the judge, produce her and bid the guardians appear; which accordingly they did, and the counterfeit Christiana.—Are you satisfied says the judge to
the

the guardians, that this is your pupil, the daughter of Mr.——, with whom you were left in trust;—Yes, my lord, said the guardians.

After a further account how she was found, the judge ordered their recognances should be withdrawn, and the uncle discharged. It happened that Christiana's nurse, who was in court about other business, hearing what a bustle had been made about her young mistress, and that she was found again; as they came out of the court, crowded to see her, and looking full upon her, believed it to be the same; but the girl not taking notice of her, she cried out—O mistress, don't you know your old nurse?—upon this the girl was started; I am sure you are not the same then; the guardians made a stop, and asked her how she came to forget her nurse so soon? she giving no answer, they began to suspect something, and brought her again into the court, and the nurse with her. The old woman said she did believe her the same at first; but upon a review, she much questioned it; but if it was her mistress, she had a scar on her left arm, above her elbow. The judge ordered they should look on her arm, which they did, and reported. There was no scar above, but one below the elbow, upon which it was generally believed she was the same, and all things set right again. However, the judge seemed more dissatisfied than before, and ordering the uncle to withdraw, examined the girl, and afterwards the man apart, who said, he found her in a wood; then he examined the woman; but the judge observed they
all

all disagreed in one point or other : at length, by crossing the account of the man and wife, and considering that Christiana must needs have remembered her nurse, it not being twelve months since she saw her, and particularly knew her, the judge concluded it was a cheat, which the woman, for fear of punishment first confessed, and then her husband owned to it, and lastly the girl ; they proved the receipt of so much money at such a time, by several neighbours, who had known this girl five or six years together, and that she was looked on as their own child, and always lived with them. Upon this discovery, an indictment was preferred against the uncle, for the murder of his niece Christiana, and he having no proof to clear himself, he was condemned to be hanged, and within a week after, was executed. It fortuned, about nine years after, at the summer assizes at Nottingham, two young gentlemen, who were lately called to the bar, whereof the judges son was one, walking out early in the fields, they saw a whole covey of gypsies under a hedge ; when they came near to them, two of them stepped out, and in their cant told them a great deal of good fortune, by looking into their hands, as they pretended ; upon which one gentleman threw them a shilling, the other called them idle whores, and said, they deserved to be whipped for public cheats ; upon which one of them, a tall black girl, told him he ought not to despise a gypsey, for he should marry one before he was three months older, at which, the gentleman

man fell a laughing. When they came home, one of them missed his gold watch, and the other all his money: they began to be angry to be thus cheated, and getting a constable, very luckily met these two going off another way; charged them with the watch and money, which they as pre-emptorily denied; upon which the constable brought them along to the open court, which was then sitting. Upon examination, they denied the fact, nor could they upon search find either about them; however, the judge ordered them to be soundly whipped for vagrants. As the constable was taking them away, the gentleman, who was the judges son, called out jocosely to the constable—Pray favour the black woman, for she tells me I shall marry a gypsey within these three months: which his father over-hearing, called them back again, and asked them how long they had pretended to tell fortunes. I thought, says the judge, all your trade had been picking of pockets.—No, and please you my lord, says the black woman, my profession is only telling of fortunes, I never understood, nor practised such unlawful arts; at which the whole court laughed heartily. My lord then asked what country woman she was, to which she answered, she thought Hertfordshire; then he asked if she was born a gypsey, she said, no, but she was as good, for she had been nine years apprentice to a gypsey; at which he asked her if she had e'er a christian name. Yes, my lord, says she, I think so, for my name is Christiana. The judge hearing the

the name Christiana, recollected himself, and remembered the story of the gentleman who was condemned for murdering his niece of that name; he then asked her if ever she had been in Essex, or had any relations there. She said, not since she was very young, which was at the time she met with the gypsies at first, and then she had an uncle there who used her very harsh, and so she ran away from him, and was never there since, nor ever enquired after him. Upon this he concluded she was the same person, and calling to the constable, bid him carry them home to his own house, and entertain them there till the court was broke up.

The whole court at this began to wonder; nor did they spare telling the young gentleman, that for ought they knew, it might be his fortune to marry a gypsey, if this young woman should prove to be a person of quality and estate; which fell out even so; for the assizes being over, the judge, who had a seat in Hertfordshire, and had known her father formerly, brought her up in his coach, and presented her to the guardians, who owned her to be the same person, which the nurse and all the surviving relations confirmed. At the same time his lordship, who knew she would be a great fortune, proposed a match between his son and her, to which she frankly consented, and was presently solemnized.

RYNSAULT AND SAPPHIRA;

OR,

PERFIDY PUNISHED.

WHEN Charles Duke of Burgundy, surnamed the Bold, reigned over spacious dominions, now swallowed up in the realms of France, he heaped many favours and honours upon Claudius Rynsault, a German, who had served him in his wars against the insults of his neighbours. The prince himself was a person of singular humanity and justice; and being prepossessed in favor of Rynsault, upon the decease of the governor of the chief town of Zealand, gave him that command. He was not long seated in his government before he cast his eyes upon Sapphira, a woman of exquisite beauty, the wife of Paul Danvelt, a wealthy merchant of the city, and under his protection and government. Rynsault was a man of a warm constitution, and violent inclinations. He knew what it was to enjoy the satisfactions which are reaped from the possession of

of beauty; but was an utter stranger to the decencies, honours and delicacies, that attend the passion towards them in elegant minds. He could with his tongue utter a passion with which his heart was wholly untouched. In short, he was one of those brutal minds which can be gratified with the violation of innocence and beauty, without the least pity, passion, or love, for that with which they are so much delighted.

Rynsault being resolved to accomplish his will on the wife of Danvelt, left no arts untried to get into a familiarity at her house; but she knew his character and disposition too well not to shun all occasions that might ensnare her into his conversation. The governor, despairing of success by ordinary means, apprehended and imprisoned her husband, under pretence of an information that he was guilty of a correspondence with the enemies of the Duke, to betray the town into their possession. This design had its desired effect; and the wife of the unfortunate Danvelt, the day before that which was appointed for his execution, presented herself in the hall of the governor's house, and as he passed through the apartment, threw herself at his feet, and holding his knees, beseeched his mercy. Rynsault beheld her with a dissembled satisfaction; and, assuming an air of thought and authority, he bid her rise, and told her she must follow him to his closet; and asking her whether she knew the hand of the letter he pulled out of his pocket? went from her, leaving this admonition aloud: "If you

would save your husband, you must give me an account of all you know, without prevarication: for every body is satisfied that he is too fond of you to be able to hide from you the names of the rest of the conspirators, or any other particulars whatsoever." He went to his closet, and soon after the lady was sent for to an audience. The servant knew his distance when matters of state were to be debated; and the governor, laying aside the air with which he had appeared in public, began to be the suppliant, and to rally an affliction which it was in her power easily to remove. She then perceived his intention; and began, with tears, to deprecate so wicked a design. Lust, like ambition takes all the faculties of the mind and body into its service and subjection. Her becoming tears, her honest anguish, the wringing of her hands, and the many changes of her posture and figure in the vehemence of speaking, were but so many attitudes in which he beheld her beauty, and farther incentives of his desire. All humanity was lost in that one appetite; and he signified to her in so many plain terms, that he was unhappy until he possessed her, and nothing else should be the price of her husband's life; and she must, before the following noon, pronounce the death or enlargement of Danvelt. After this notification, when he saw Sapphira enough distracted to make the subject of their discourse appear to common eyes different from what it was, he called his servants to conduct her to the gate. Loaded with insup-
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portable affliction, she immediately repaired to her husband, and having signified to the gaolers that she had a proposal to make to her husband from the governor, she was left alone with him, revealed to him all that had passed, and represented the endless conflict she was in between love to his person and fidelity to his bed. It is easy to imagine the violent affliction this honest pair were in upon such an incident, in lives not accustomed to any but common occurrences. The man was restrained by shame from speaking what his fear prompted on so near an approach of death; but let fall words that signified to her, he should not think her polluted, though she had confessed to him the governor had violated her person, since he knew her will had no part in the action. She left him with this oblique permission to save a life he had not resolution to resign for the safety of his honour.

The next morning the unhappy Sapphira attended the governor, and, being led into a remote apartment, submitted to his desires. Rynsault commended her charms, claimed a familiarity after what had passed between them; and with an air of gaiety, in the language of a gallant, bid her return and take her husband out of prison; but, continued he, my fair one must not be offended that I have taken care he shall not be an interruption to our future assignations. These last words foreboded what she found when she came to the gaol, her husband executed by order of Rynsault.

It was remarkable, that the woman, who was full of tears and lamentations during the whole course of her affliction, uttered neither sigh nor complaint, but stood fixed with grief at this consummation of her misfortunes. She betook herself to her abode; and, after having in solitude paid her devotions to Him who is the avenger of injured innocence, she repaired privately to court. Her person, and a certain grandeur of sorrow, negligent of forms, gained her an easy passage into the presence of the Duke her sovereign. As soon as she came into the presence, she broke forth into the following words: "Behold, O mighty Charles, a wretch weary of life, though it has always been spent in innocence and virtue. It is not in your power to redress my injuries, but it is to avenge them; and if the protection of the distressed, and the punishment of oppressors, is a task worthy of a prince, I bring the Duke of Burgundy ample matter for doing honour to his own great name, and wiping infamy off mine." When she had spoken this, she delivered to the Duke a paper reciting her story. He read it with all the emotion that indignation and pity could raise in a prince jealous of his honour in the behaviour of his officers and the prosperity of his subjects.

Upon an appointed day Rynsault was sent for to court, and in the presence of a few of the council, confronted by Sapphira. The prince asking, "Do you know that lady?" Rynsault, as soon as he could recover his surprise, told the Duke

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Duke he would marry her, if his highness would please to think that a reparation. The Duke seemed contented with this answer, and stood by during the immediate solemnization of the ceremony. At the conclusion of it, he told Rynsault, "Thus far have you done as constrained by my authority, and I shall not be satisfied of your kind usage of her, without you sign a gift of your whole estate to her after your decease." To the performance of this also the Duke was a witness. When these two acts were executed, the Duke, turning to the lady, told her, "It now remains for me to put you in quiet possession of what your husband has so bountifully bestowed on you;" and ordered the immediate execution of Rynsault.

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